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News Release

ICE FUGITIVE & SENIOR MEMBER OF DRUG CARTEL NABBED IN COLOMBIA -- \$5 Million Reward Had Been Offered For Information Leading To His Arrest -

WASHINGTON, D.C. – John P. Clark, Acting Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), today announced that a key ICE drug trafficking and money laundering fugitive was arrested on Saturday in Colombia.

The Colombian National Police's "Jungla" unit, working with special agents from the ICE Attaché Office in Bogotá and the Drug Enforcement Administration, captured **Jhon Eidelber Cano-Correa** (dob 12/13/1963) in Colombia's Antioquia department after a brief firefight that left one Colombian official wounded.

Cano-Correa is considered one of the most violent and dangerous members of Colombia's Norte Valle Cartel and a significant ICE criminal fugitive. In 2004, the U.S. State Department offered a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to the arrest of Cano-Correa and four other Norte Valle Cartel fugitives. Cano-Correa is charged in a July 2004 indictment in the Eastern District of New York with drug and money laundering violations in connection with the Norte Valle Cartel.

Indictments out of the Eastern District of New York in 2003 and 2004 describe the Norte Valle Cartel as Colombia's largest and most feared drug organization. Between 1990 and 2004, the cartel allegedly exported more than 1.2 million pounds of cocaine worth more than \$10 billion to the U.S. At one time, the cartel was believed to be responsible for between 30 and 50 percent of the cocaine entering the United States.

"The arrest of Jhon Eidelber Cano-Correa, a dangerous ICE criminal fugitive, is yet another example of the unprecedented law enforcement cooperation between U.S. and Colombian authorities. The arrest also demonstrates the value of pursuing the money trail in drug investigations. This case began with a raid on three money transmitting businesses in Queens nearly a decade ago and ultimately led to the highest levels of the Norte Valle Cartel," said Acting Assistant Secretary Clark.

The cartel indictments and Cano-Correa's arrest resulted from a lengthy investigation that began in the mid-1990s and was conducted by the El Dorado Task Force, an ICE-led anti-money laundering task force in New York, as well as by ICE agents in Colombia and Colombian authorities.

The ICE probe initially focused on money transmitting businesses in Queens, New York. ICE agents determined that three of these transmitting businesses were owned by Juan Alberto Monsalve, the Norte Valle Cartel's chief drug distributor in New York. Monsalve was responsible for distributing thousands of kilos of cocaine, laundering more than \$70 million, and ordering multiple murders. Monsalve was arrested by ICE agents, convicted, and in May 2002, sentenced to life in prison.

The ICE investigation continued, revealing the structure of the Norte Valle Cartel and leading to charges in Eastern District of New York against its key leaders. The indictments charged Luis Hernando Gomez -Bustamante, a.k.a. "Rasguno," with operating a Continuing Criminal Enterprise in connection with his leadership role in the cartel.

Another accused leader of the cartel, Arcangel de Jesus Henao-Montoya, was charged with drug and money laundering violations. Several other key members of the cartel including Cano-Correa, Dagoberto Rios-Flores and Jose Aldemar Rendon-Ramirez were charged as well.

- On January 15, 2004, Henao-Montoya was captured in Panama and expelled by Panamanian authorities into ICE custody in New York. Henao-Montoya faces a maximum sentence of life in prison if convicted. He remains in custody in New York.
- On July 2, 2004, Gomez-Bustamante was detained by Cuban authorities in Cuba after entering that nation on a false passport.
- On December 28, 2004, Rios-Flores was arrested outside Medellin, Colombia, by Colombian authorities working with ICE agents.
- On July 14, 2005, Rendon-Ramirez was arrested outside Medellin, Colombia, by Colombian authorities. Rendon-Ramirez is suspected of serving as a financial officer in the cartel.

#ICE#

ICE, the primary investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, was established to bring a unified focus to the enforcement of U.S. immigration and customs laws, with the principal goal of preventing violations by terrorists and other criminals who threaten the nation's security.